Creation of Welfare Fund for lawyers

* 16. SHR1C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to enact a legislation for creation of Welfare Fund for lawyers of the country;

(b) if so, the details of the circumstances which have prompted Government to initiate the aforesaid legislation and the objectives to be achieved thereby;

(c) whether the Bar Council of India has been consulted in the matter;

(d) if so, the details of the suggestions; and

(e) by when a Bill on the subjects is likely to be brought before the Parliament?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRIARUN JAITELY): (a) and (e) A legislation for creation of Welfare Fund for lawyers, namely, the Advocates' Welfare Fund Act, 2001 (45 of 2001) has already been enacted and come into force with effect from 1st November, 2001 in the whole of India except the States in which the enactments specified in Schedule II to the said Act are applicable.

(b) Social security in the form of financial assistance to junior lawyers and welfare schemes for indigent or disabled advocates has long been a matter of concern for the legal fraternity. Some States have established funds for the benefit of advocates and certain States have even enacted legislations also. However, there is neither any uniformity nor the said provisions are considered adequate. Moreover, the Advocates Act does not authorize levy of any welfare fund stamp of *Vakalatnama.* There has, therefore, been felt a need for a Central legislation applicable to the Union Territories and the States which do not have their own enactments on the subject, for constitution of 'Advocates' Welfare Fund' by the appropriate Government.

(c) and (d) Bar Council of India had been consulted and its suggestions were duly considered before introduction of the Bill on the subject in Parliament.

Disinvestment of Petroleum related PSUs

* 17. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state: